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Penkovsky Papers
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Soviet Expert Thinks 'Penkovsky Papers' Are a Forgery

First of Two Articles

By Victor Zorza
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LONDON—"Their authenticity," says the introduction to the Penkovsky Papers, the memoirs of the Anglo-American spy in Russia, "is beyond question." It is not.

Indeed, the book itself contains the evidence showing certain parts of it to be a forgery, even though other sections of the book are evidently made up of intelligence information provided by Penkovsky before his arrest.



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But the book does not, in fact, claim to be made up of Penkovsky's intelligence reports to the West. On the contrary, it is said to be quite distinct from them, and to consist of "notes, sketches and comments" accumulated by him during his spying career in 1961-62 and "smuggled out of the Soviet Union" only in the autumn of 1962, at the time of his arrest. It is said that Penkovsky hoped

that they might eventually be published "to clarify his motives and to clear his name beyond question." It is curious that a work with so noble a purpose should include so much purely military and political intelligence.

The 'Low-down'

Much of the book seems calculated to show the Soviet system in the worst possible light, but this would be consistent with Penkovsky's attempt to justify his defection. It is even possible to stretch this interpretation to explain the "low-down"—and it really is low—on the sexual mores, the drunkenness and cupidity of some of the people he knew in the higher ranks of the political, military and intelligence quarters. "I have absolutely no intention of defaming the marshals and generals," says, after giving some particularly choice details.

He adds that he had "intentionally omitted the subject of moral degradation and drunkenness"—which he had not. "I know one thing for sure, though: all our generals have mistresses, and some

have two or more." All? For sure?

It is conceivable that western intelligence organizations might have been interested in the peccadilloes of members of the Soviet General Staff, just as Soviet intelligence would be interested in their western opposite numbers, and that Penkovsky thought it right to supply this information. But he would hardly write it all down for posterity.

"Intelligence Feat"

The introduction says that the extent and ingenuity of Penkovsky's work add up perhaps to the most extraordinary intelligence feat of this century. If there is no Soviet spy now working at an even higher level in the West, then this claim may well be valid. Much of the intelligence information reproduced in the book is obviously genuine.

Western government experts revealed their knowledge of it some time ago in the course of discussion about Soviet affairs. Penkovsky's information about the ignominious failure of Khrushchev's "secret weapon," which blew up on the launching pad, en-

abled the western leaders to treat Soviet threats and boasts with composure. Penkovsky's information about Khrushchev's plans during the German crisis of 1961 enabled the West to make the dispositions which warded off the Soviet threat to Berlin.

Penkovsky sent reports on the bickering over the building up of the Soviet missile force, favored by Khrushchev, and the maintenance of adequate conventional forces, favored by the marshals.

Dispute in Kremlin

This gave western intelligence analysts the clues that helped them to study between the lines of the Soviet press the most important political dispute that raged in the Soviet leadership in recent years—on the allocation of resources between civilian and military needs, within the military field itself.

This contributed greatly to the western governments' understanding of the factors that caused the fall of Khrushchev, even though this occurred some two years after Penkovsky's arrest.

For some months before the Cuban missile crisis, Penkovsky and his western masters knew that he was being watched by Soviet counter-intelligence. He could therefore neither acquire nor send any intelligence on what was to prove the most fateful confrontation between East and West, and suggestions that he was asked to report on Soviet operations in Cuba just before the crisis would appear to be without foundation. Yet, paradoxically, his contribution was probably decisive.